

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A transport element, comprising:
a port group comprising a plurality of geographically distributed ports;
point-to-multipoint connectivity between the ports;
an identifier operable to represent the port group as a single element to disparate elements and associated with a single IP address;
a primary processor operable to generate routing information for the transport element and to distribute the routing information to the ports in the port group for traffic processing, the routing information comprising a routing information base (RIB); and
a secondary processor for each port in the port group, the secondary processor operable to receive the RIB from the primary processor and to generate a forwarding information base (FIB) for the port based on the RIB.
2. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, wherein the transport element is defined in a transport network, the identifier operable to represent the port group as a single element to an external node outside the transport network.
3. (Original) The transport element of Claim 2, wherein the port group is operable to participate with the external node in protocol exchanges.
4. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, wherein the transport element comprises a transport router interconnecting a set of subtending Internet protocol (IP) routers.
5. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, wherein the transport element comprises a transport Ethernet switch interconnecting a set of subtending Ethernet switches.
6. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, wherein the transport element comprises a transport Frame Relay switch interconnecting a set of subtending Frame Relay switches.
7. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, wherein the port group is user protocol independent and transparently interconnects a plurality of external ports of an external network.

8. (Previously Presented) The transport element of Claim 1, wherein the transport element is unaware of an internal topology of the transport network outside of the transport element.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, further comprising a set of high-speed links directly connecting the ports of the port group.

13. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, further comprising multipoint-to-multipoint connectivity between the ports.

14. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, further comprising each port operable to receive Internet protocol (IP) packets, to add an internal transport overhead to the IP packet to generate an internal packet, and to transmit the internal packet directly on an optical link to an egress port in the port group.

15. (Original) The transport element of Claim 1, further comprising the geographically distributed ports connected in a non-ring topology.

16. (Previously Presented) A transport network, comprising:
a plurality of geographically distributed nodes;
each node including a plurality of ports;
a plurality of transport elements, each transport element including a port group having a plurality of ports from the geographically distributed nodes and associated with a single IP address, each transport element comprising:
a primary processor operable to generate routing information for the transport element and to distribute the routing information to the ports in the port group for traffic processing, the routing information comprising a routing information base (RIB); and
a secondary processor for each port in the port group, the secondary processor operable to receive the RIB from the primary processor and to generate a forwarding information base (FIB) for the port based on the RIB;
point-to-multipoint connectivity between the ports of the port groups of the transport elements; and
each transport element unaware of topologies of the other transport elements in the transport network.

17. (Original) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising an internal address space for the transport network independent from an external network.

18. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising an identifier operable to represent each port group as a single element within the transport network and external to the transport network.

19. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising software stored on computer-readable media, the software operable to selectively define the point-to-multipoint connectivity between the ports of the port groups.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising an identifier operable to represent each port group as a single element to an external node, each port group operable to use the identifier to participate with the external node in protocol exchanges.

22. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising each transport element unaware of an internal topology of the transport network outside of the transport element.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising a set of high-speed links directly connecting the ports of at least one port group.

27. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising multipoint-to-multipoint connectivity between the ports of at least one port group.

28. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising each port of at least one port group operable to receive Internet protocol (IP) packets, to add an internal transport overhead to the IP packet to generate an internal packet and to transmit the internal packet directly on an optical link to an egress port in the port group.

29. (Previously Presented) The transport network of Claim 16, further comprising the ports in at least one port group connected in a non-ring topology.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Canceled)

32. (Canceled)

33. (Canceled)

34. (Previously Presented) A method for provisioning a transport element in a transport network, comprising:

defining at least one port group in the transport network, the port group comprising a plurality of ports from geographically distributed nodes of the transport network;

defining point-to-multipoint connectivity between the ports in the port group;

representing the port group as a single entity to an external network and associated with a single IP address; and

defining the transport element in a transport network including a plurality of transport elements, the transport element unaware of topologies of the other transport elements in the transport network, the transport element comprising:

a primary processor operable to generate routing information for the transport element and to distribute the routing information to the ports in the port group for traffic processing, the routing information comprising a routing information base (RIB); and

a secondary processor for each port in the port group, the secondary processor operable to receive the RIB from the primary processor and to generate a forwarding information base (FIB) for the port based on the RIB.

35. (Original) The method of Claim 34, further comprising:

discovering a topology of the port group; and

generating routing information based on the topology of the port group to define the point-to-multipoint connectivity between ports of the port group.

36. (Original) The method of Claim 35, further comprising:

generating the routing information at a centralized location for the port group; and

distributing the routing information to each of the ports in the port group.

37. (Original) The method of Claim 34, wherein the transport element is a transport router and the identifier comprises a router identifier.

38. (Original) The method of Claim 37, further comprising peering the transport router with subtending routers.

39. (Canceled)

40. (Canceled)

41. (Previously Presented) The transport element of Claim 1, wherein the transport element is defined in a transport network including a plurality of transport elements, the transport element unaware of topologies of the other transport elements in the transport network.